

The Nativity of Christ and 'Material Pope'

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The Nativity of Christ and 'Material Pope'

I thought of posting this short article after Christmas so as not to spoil the sublime festive mood with reflections on something gloomy and unpleasant. But as a proverb says "never put off until tomorrow what you can do today." Also, as St. Paul says: **"Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine"** (II TO TIMOTHY 4:2).

So, I invite you to reflect on "material popes" in the context of the Nativity of Christ.

But first, let's see what Bishop Sanborn said and wrote about them.

On November 15, 2021 Bishop Sanborn [said this](#):

"Thesis of Gerard de Laurier does not say that Bergoglio is validly elected pope. That's false. It's false accusation. We say, thesis says that he is validly elected and he is therefore a pope-elect, but he is not the pope. He is not a validly elected pope. Pope could never be said of him, for as long as he is promulgating heresy."

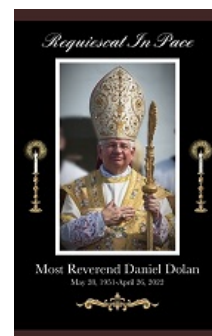
However in the article ["ON BEING POPE MATERIALLY, SECOND PART: EXPLANATION OF THE THESIS"](#) he wrote about Vatican II "material popes", "Paul VI", "John Paul I" and "John Paul II", as follows:

- "In the present article, I intend to demonstrate the thesis that the "popes" during and after the Second Vatican Council are not popes formally but only materially." p. 1
- "But the electors of the pope, even those who adhere to Vatican II, intend to designate someone legally to receive the papacy. Likewise Paul VI and John Paul II, although popes merely materially, intend to nominate subjects to have the faculty or right of designating a pope when they nominate cardinals. Therefore the conclaves, even those after the Second Vatican Council, intend the good of succession to the papal see objectively, and those who are elected to this see objectively intend the good of naming electors of the pope. This merely material continuity of authority is able to indefinitely continue, to the extent that the conclaves intend to elect a pope and that those elected intend to nominate electors." p. 10
- "Therefore he who is designated to the papacy, even if he does not receive authority, because of an obstacle either of heresy or of refusal of Episcopal consecration or for any other reason, nevertheless he is able to nominate others to receive authority, (e.g., bishops) and even electors of the pope" p. 11
- "Likewise electors who are named by merely material popes make a legal designation when they elect someone for the purpose of receiving the papacy, because in this act no law is made, and therefore the electors need no jurisdiction, that is, no right of making law, but merely the right of active voice in order that they validly and legally designate." p. 11
- "It is clear: when the pope dies, the right of designating the successor does not die with him. The legal possessor of this right of designating is the body of electors or conclave. *For which reason, the conclave or the body of electors is able to communicate the right of designating even to a material pope, that is, to him who is designated for the papacy, but without papal authority, in such a way that this material pope can nominate others legally, and thus perpetually sustain the legal body of electors.*" pp. 12-13
- "This right of designating, which is found in Paul VI or in John Paul II does not constitute them as popes, because they lack authority or the right of making law. Therefore they are not popes except materially. They can, nevertheless, designate electors and even bishops for the purpose of succeeding to sees of authority, and even validly change the rules of election, especially if these changes have been accepted by the conclave." p. 13
- "How, therefore, can someone who has given his consent remain a pope only materially? Answer: because matter and form cannot be united unless the matter has due proportion to the form, which happens in two ways, namely through the natural order of matter to form, and by the removal of any impediment.
He therefore who has been legally elected to the papacy receives *whatever authority he is capable of*, i.e., to which he does not posit an impediment. Therefore it is possible that someone is capable of receiving the right of designating which regards legitimate succession and the permanence of the corporeal life of the Church" pp. 13-14
- "For which reasons, the thesis, which I will prove below, provides a perfect explanation of the current problem, and a position that is truly Catholic, because on the one hand it preserves the indefectibility of the Church and the infallibility of its magisterium, by refusing to recognize the authority of Christ in those who promulgate error, but on the other hand it protects the apostolicity and unity of the Church as a unified and single moral body, by recognizing in them who are legally designated to ecclesiastical offices a legal designation until this designation should be taken away from them by competent authority." p. 18
- "THESES. HE WHO HAS BEEN ELECTED TO THE PAPACY BY A CONCLAVE DULY AND LEGALLY CONVOKED, BUT WHO HAS THE INTENTION OF TEACHING ERROR, OR OF PROMULGATING HARMFUL DISCIPLINES, IS NOT ABLE TO RECEIVE PAPAL AUTHORITY UNTIL HE SHOULD RECENT AND REJECT THE ERROR OR THE HARMFUL DISCIPLINES, OR IN OTHER WORDS, HE IS NOT THE POPE FORMALLY; HE REMAINS, HOWEVER VALIDLY DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE THE PAPAL AUTHORITY, IN OTHER WORDS HE IS THE POPE MATERIALLY, UNTIL A LEGAL CONCLAVE OR OTHER COMPETENT AUTHORITY SHOULD ASCERTAIN THAT THE SEE IS VACANT." p. 18
- "Minor: But he who has been elected by a conclave duly and legally convoked, but who has the intention to teach error or to promulgate harmful disciplines (namely John Paul II), has neither died, nor has voluntarily refused or renounced the designation, nor has been removed by competent authority."

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Conclusion: Therefore he who has been elected by a conclave duly and legally convoked, but who has the intention of teaching error or of promulgating harmful disciplines (namely John Paul II) has not lost his legal designation to the papacy.

Proof of the minor: From the facts. John Paul II (1) is living, (2) has accepted the designation of the Conclave and has never given it up, and (3) has not been removed by competent authority." p. 19

- "But the author of the magisterium is he who teaches. Therefore John Paul II is the authentic interpreter of the magisterium of the Second Vatican Council." p. 21
- "It is merely a moral faculty of designating legally him who should receive supreme authority. Nothing, therefore, is required for the possession and for the exercise of this right *except that someone be legally designated by him who has the legal right to designate the electors of the pope*. The possession of authority, i.e., the right of making law requires that the possessor intend to direct the Church to its proper ends, but the possession of the right of designation requires that the possessor intend only the continuity of the hierarchy of the Church. But the present electors, even if they should favor the Second Vatican Council and the Novus Ordo in general, intend objectively the good of the hierarchical continuity of the Church. Therefore validly and legally they possess the right of designating. And he who has been elected validly and legally has been elected, and possesses a legal right to the papacy." p. 24
- "But he who has been elected to the papacy receives authority immediately after the acceptance of the election, unless he should posit an obstacle to receiving the authority, as I have said above. Therefore it is possible that he who has been elected to the papacy receive the right of designating which regards the continuity of the body of the Church, but not receive the authority which regards the making of laws. In such a case, the pope-elect (the pope merely materially) would designate legally and validly the electors of popes, but would not legally and validly make laws. And such is the case of conciliar popes, who therefore validly and legally designate electors of popes, even Novus Ordo "popes." p. 25
- "The thesis has no foundation in Canon Law.
Resp. I deny. If you research topics concerning the vacancy of ecclesiastical offices, you will find the distinction of offices which are vacant (1) *de iure* and *de facto*; (2) *de iure* but not *de facto*; (3) *de facto* but not *de iure*. The thesis holds that the office of the papacy is vacant *de facto* but not *de iure* in this sense: John Paul II *de facto* does not possess the office of the papacy, but he *possesses a right to the papacy*, given that there has been no declaration to the contrary by competent authority. In other words, he is the legal titular of the papacy, but does not have possession, because he posits an obstacle to receiving authority." pp. 26-27

Instead of the Catholic doctrinal clarity, the article "ON BEING POPE MATERIALLY" is an example of misusing canonical terms and mixing them with new terms, which mislead the readers. All the terms are mixed in such a way that everyone can interpret them in his own way as he likes.

I will also allow myself to come up with a new term; the article "ON BEING POPE MATERIALLY, SECOND PART: EXPLANATION OF THE THESIS" is a **"maze of sophistry"**.

It looks like whatever is said about "Paul VI" or "John Paul II" applies to Bergoglio as well. "Pope could never be said of him" (*taken from video*), but "he is able to nominate others to receive authority, (e.g., bishops) and even electors of the pope". He "lacks authority or the right of making law", but he "has the right to legally and validly designate" a "legal body of electors" in order to continue "legitimate succession and the permanence of the corporeal life of the Church". He can "even validly change the rules of election" so that "it protects the apostolicity and unity of the Church as a unified and single moral body". He is a "material pope" and "authentic interpreter of the magisterium of the Second Vatican Council."

And [a new explanation of Bergoglio's status](#) issued by Most Holy Trinity Seminary on December 7, 2021:

"Francis is pope materially, but not formally."

"Habemus papam materialiter, sed non formaliter."

Speaking of Christ and Peter, someone might say that a heretical "material pope" can be compared to Peter who also denied Christ. But this comparison is completely inappropriate.

Peter demonstrated a momentary weakness under the influence of invincible fear when he saw Christ wounded and offended by His persecutors. Although it was actually a very grave sin, it cannot be called denial in the strict, moral, sense.

No matter what you call Peter's action: crime, or weakness, not yet seeing Christ Risen in glory, Who conquered death, Peter realized his fall within several hours, on the same night, and made an act of perfect contrition, and "every day, during his entire life, he bitterly wept and deplored his fall":

"*He wept bitterly,*" at the thought of his sins, particularly his pride, his foolish boasting and presumption, when his Divine Master forewarned him of his fall, and still more, at the recollection of his shameful denial of his Divine Master. The ancient historians of the life of St. Peter, assure us, that his penance and bitter tears were not of a passing kind; that every day, during his entire life, he bitterly wept and deplored his fall." p. 543

(AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPELS, consisted of AN ANALYSIS OF EACH CHAPTER, AND OF A COMMENTARY CRITICAL, EXEGETICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND MORAL, BY HIS GRACE THE MOST REV. DR. MACVILLY, AECBISHOP OF TUAM, FOURTH EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED, DUBLIN, M. H. GILL & SON, 50 UPPER O'CONNELL STREET, NEW YORK: BENZIGER BROTHERS, 113 BROADWAY, 1808, p. 543)

Unlike Peter in the moment of his fall, heretical "material popes" see and know Christ in glory. But in spite of this, they deny Him and join His persecutors. They do this not under the influence of invincible fear, but out of a lust for earthly fame and dirty money. If you want to compare them with someone, then you will not find a more suitable candidate than Judas who was so blinded by avarice that he merely bargained for the money, regardless of how the chief priests would afterwards treat his Master. Heretical "material popes" are not material successors of St. Peter; they are rather formal successors of Judas.

Speaking of the Nativity of Christ, I think that He prefers, even for quite a long time, to keep the office of His Vicar vacant, because He does not need, even for a few minutes, a disservice of "material popes" who worship not Him but His persecutors.

Just as then, Christ chose not Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish religion (at that time), but Bethlehem

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to be the place of His Nativity, so now instead of Rome, the capital of the Catholic religion (in the past), He chooses any distant city or village where people believe in Him, worship Him, and bring Him the gifts: homage, prayer and suffering.

But even in Bethlehem **"there was no room for them in the inn"** (St. Luke, 2:7):

"In Bethlehem's homes are joy and comfort and warmth, while the Savior of the world wanders in the street. At last, when all else had failed, Joseph remembered that there was to the east of the city a lonely cave, into which the shepherds used sometimes to drive their flocks in severe weather. ... It contained nothing but a little hay and straw forgotten by the shepherds, and a wooden manger used to hold the fodder for cattle. Such was the palace prepared by heaven's King to receive His only begotten Son who was to redeem the world."

(**THE LIFE OF CHRIST**, ADAPTED FROM THE ORIGINAL OF REV. L. C. BUSINGER BY REV. JOHN E. MULLETT, PUBLISHED WITH THE IMPRIMATUR OF HIS EMINENCE THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK, NEW YORK CINCINNATI CHICAGO, BENZIGER BROTHERS, Printers to the Holy Apostolic See, Nihil Obstat REMY LAFORT, Censor Librorum, Imprimatur +JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY, Archbishop of New York, New York, March 4, 1918, pp. 47, 48)

Just as then, there was no room for Christ in the inn, so now there is no room for Him at a "material conclave". According to the "Thesis", a "material pope" "lacks authority or the right of making law", but "he is able to nominate others to receive authority, (e.g., bishops) and even electors of the pope", and he can "even validly change the rules of election". The "Thesis", therefore, no longer needs a "formal pope", since *according to the "Thesis"*, a "material conclave" gives its "material pope" all needed authority over the "material church".

However, the Catholic Doctrine says that only Christ Himself, not a "material conclave", gives the authority to the Pope.

Just as then, Christ became Our Savior not in the inn, but in a lonely cave prepared by the Heavenly King, so now He will use not a "material conclave", but some "lonely cave" duly prepared by the Heavenly King.

I wish readers a Holy and Merry Christmas.

Fr. Valerii

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